

# Peasant Movements in Colonial India

North Bihar 1917-1942



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# **Peasant Movements in Colonial India**

North Bihar 1917-1942

**Stephen Henningham**



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To the Memory of

**MERLE FLORENCE GREER, 1914-1979**

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAR	Annual Administrative Report
AICCP	All-India Congress Committee Papers
BSA	Bihar State Archives
C	Collection
f	file
F	Fasli
FMP	Freedom Movement Papers
FR	Fortnightly Report
FR(1)	Fortnightly Report for first half of month
FR(2)	Fortnightly Report for second half of month
G	General Department, Raj Darbhanga Archives
GGB	Government of Great Britain
GB	Government of Bihar
GBEN	Government of Bengal
GBO	Government of Bihar and Orissa
GOI	Government of India
HP	Home Political Department [of the Government of India]
IOL	India Office Library
JPNP	Jay Prakash Narayan Papers
KW	Keep With (a file)
L	Law Department, Raj Darbhanga Archives
LR	Land Revenue Proceedings
NAI	National Archives of India
NML	Nehru Memorial Library
PP	Rajendra Prasad Papers
PS	Political Special Department [of the Govern- ment of Bihar (and Orissa)]
RDA	Raj Darbhanga Archives
WBA	West Bengal Archives

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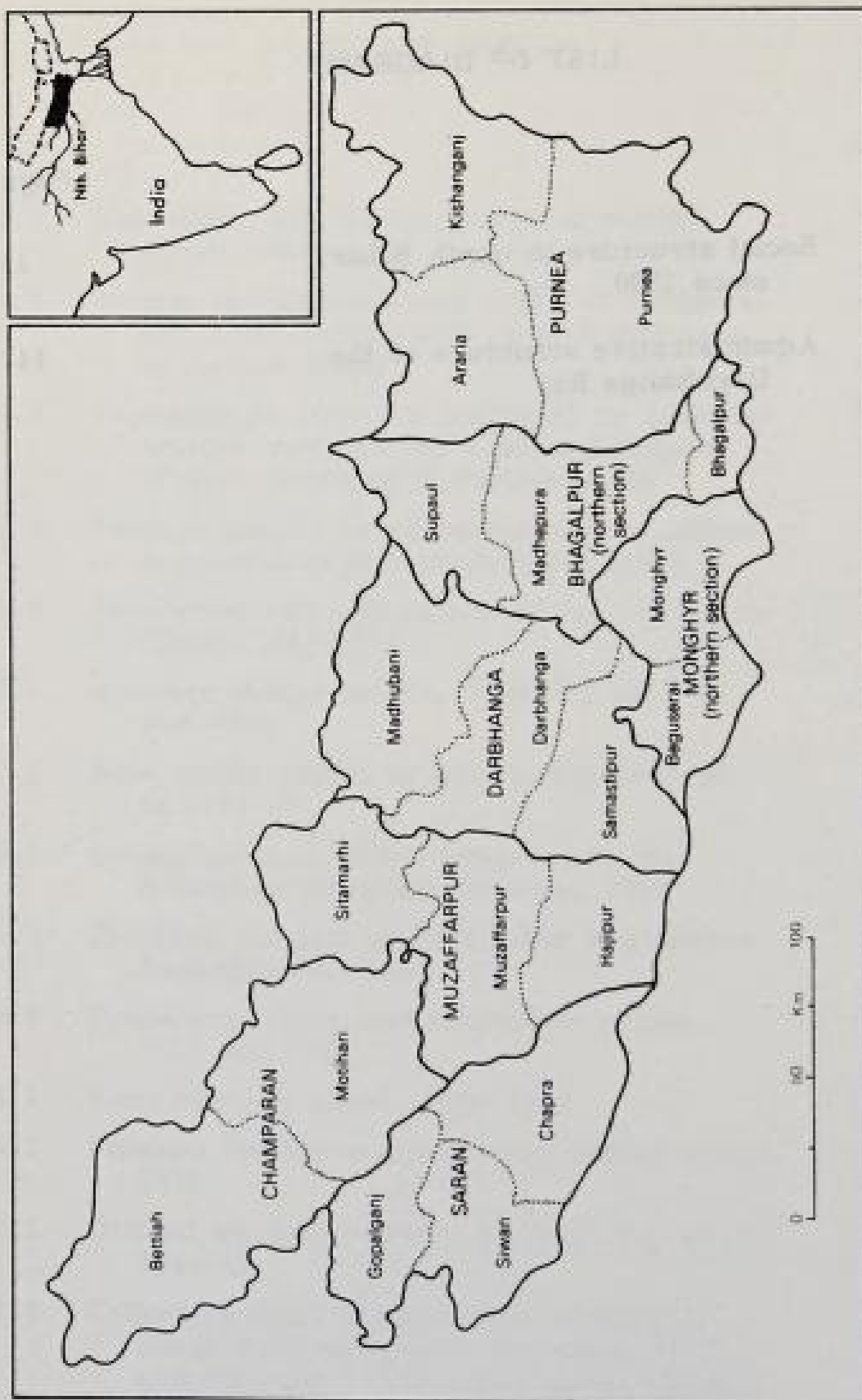
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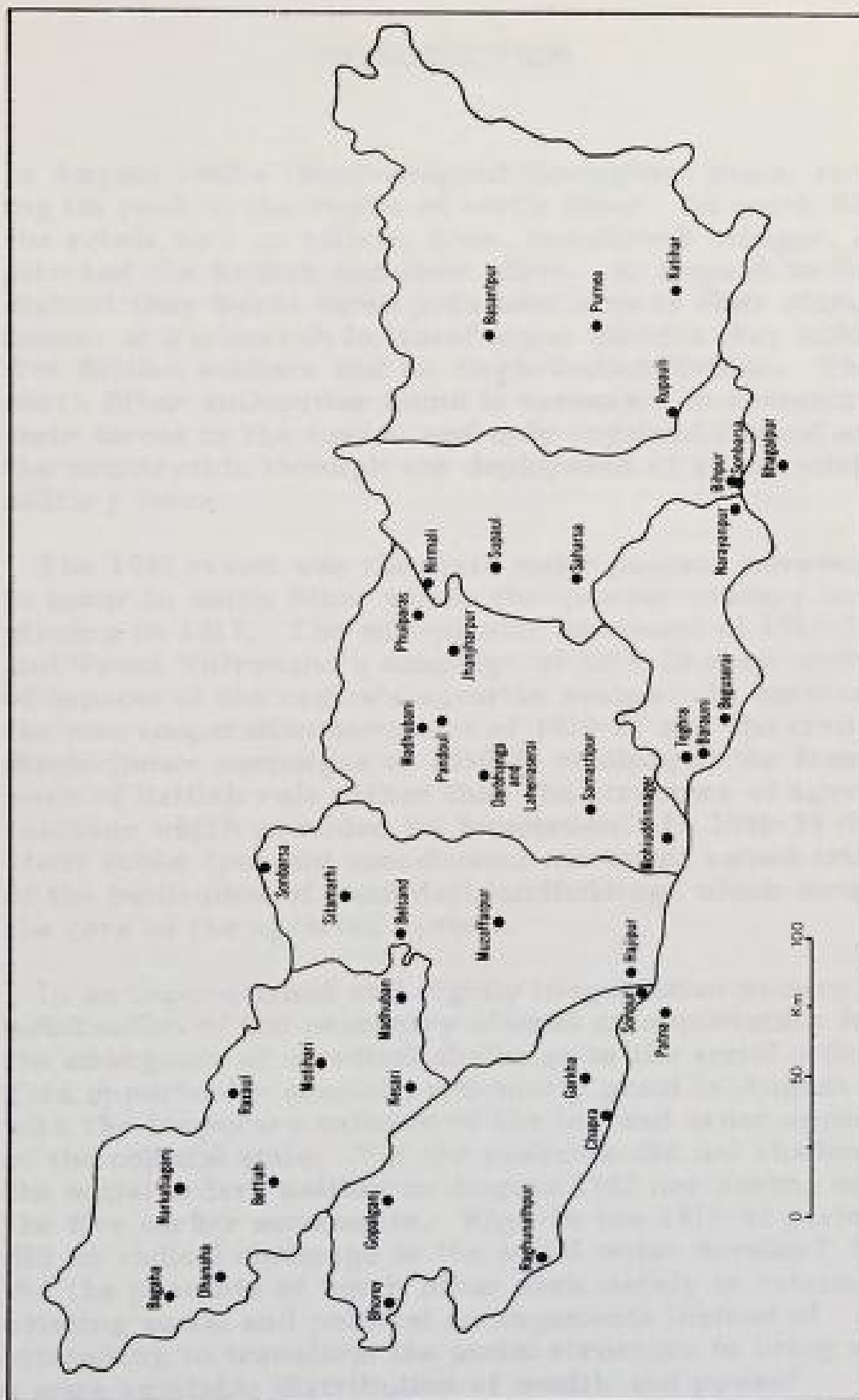
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## INTRODUCTION

In August 1942 a revolt erupted throughout India, reaching its peak in the region of north Bihar. In north Bihar the rebels tore up railway lines, demolished bridges, and attacked the British and their allies. At Rupauli in Purnea district they burnt three policemen alive in their station-house; at Marhowrah in Muzaffarpur district they killed five British soldiers and an Anglo-Indian civilian. The north Bihar authorities found it necessary to concentrate their forces in the towns, and only regained control of the countryside through the deployment of substantial military force.

The 1942 revolt was the sixth major peasant movement to occur in north Bihar within the quarter-century beginning in 1917. The anti-planter movement of 1917-23 and Swami Vidyanand's campaign of 1919-20 were critical of aspects of the region's agrarian system. In contrast the non-cooperation movement of 1920-22 and the civil disobedience campaigns of 1930-34 challenged the framework of British rule rather than the structure of agrarian relations which provided its foundation. In 1936-39 the *kisan sabha* (peasant association) movement raised criticisms of the institution of zamindari landholding, which formed the core of the agrarian system.

In an impoverished and rigidly inegalitarian society the mobilisation of the peasantry offered an opportunity for the emergence of a radical challenge to the social order. This opportunity seemed particularly great in August 1942, with the temporary collapse of the law and order apparatus of the colonial state. Yet the peasants did not challenge the social order, neither in August 1942 nor during any of the five earlier movements. Why, in the 1917-42 period, did no radical challenge to the social order develop? Why did the peasants of north Bihar seek merely to reform existing social and political arrangements instead of attempting to transform the social structure to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and power?

This book seeks to answer these questions. After portraying the economy and society of north Bihar in the early twentieth century, it examines the peasant movements in detail. It explores their general context and particular setting, their leadership and following, their general characteristics and course of development, and their interactions with the colonial state and with the Bihar branch of the Indian National Congress.

Peasant unrest in north Bihar formed part of a general upheaval among the peasants of India during the final decades of British rule. Peasants comprise the majority of the Indian population, and their extensive mobilisation provided crucial impetus for the nationalist movement and made possible the partial expression of popular discontents and aspirations. This study draws on British and Congress records, on newspapers and private papers, and on the hitherto little used records of the Darbhanga Raj – the largest landed estate in Bihar – to supplement existing research on peasant unrest in modern India.<sup>1</sup> People other than peasants participated in the six movements. Nevertheless, the movements may be categorised as peasant phenomena because in the overwhelmingly agrarian society of north Bihar their development and character depended on the extensive participation of the peasantry.

In this study it is argued that the Bihar Congress and the colonial state combined to thwart the emergence of radical initiatives. The Congress wished to protect the interests of the small landlords and rich peasants who dominated the villages through their control over land and labour. Accordingly it directed mass turbulence against the British and helped contain potentially radical challenges. Meanwhile, British efforts to minimise social change reinforced the position of the small landlords and rich peasants, thus providing the Bihar Congress with a stable basis for its activities. Therefore the extensive mobilisation of the peasantry shook the framework of British rule but did not transform the social order.



## CHAPTER 1

### EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY NORTH BIHAR

North Bihar covers 21,406 square miles in north-eastern India. The region comprises a vast, rectangular plain, stretching 250 miles from Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces) in the west to Bengal in the east and 80 miles from the Ganges on the south to the Nepal frontier on the north. The Nepal frontier runs parallel and adjacent to the foothills of the Himalayas. From the Himalayas the Gandak, the Bagmati, the Kosi and several lesser rivers flow south to the Ganges. Lethargic much of the year, these rivers become raging torrents once the monsoon arrives. They often flood, causing much damage but also leaving rich deposits of silt which enable the region to feed its teeming population.

At present north Bihar is incorporated with south Bihar and Chota Nagpur into the state of Bihar. A province of the Mughal Empire in the early eighteenth century, after the battle of Buxar in 1760 Bihar became part of the British administered Bengal Presidency. In 1911 the British separated Bihar from the Bengal Presidency and united it with Orissa to form the province of Bihar and Orissa. In 1936 the British separated Bihar and Orissa and established the province of Bihar. In 1947, Bihar became a state within the Indian Union.

In the beginning of the twentieth century north Bihar was a sleepy backwater of British India. Within its grossly unequal society, small landlords and rich peasants predominated. Social inequality created a potential for conflict, but the small landlords and rich peasants effectively controlled the social order, and open conflict only developed under their direction. The quiescence of north Bihar society provided a stable basis for the operation of a skeletal British administration which devoted itself primarily to the maintenance of public order and to the

collection of land revenue. But the stability of this basis was threatened because the pressure of population growth on a sluggish agrarian economy was increasing the potential for the widespread occurrence of conflict. In this chapter the social structure in north Bihar is described, conflict and its control are discussed, the framework of British rule is examined, and the effects of population pressure on the region's under-developed economy are discussed.

# I

In the early twentieth century, north Bihar had an overwhelmingly agrarian economy and society.<sup>1</sup> Less than 3 per cent of the region's inhabitants lived in towns, and four out of every five of them depended directly on agriculture for their livelihood. Land provided the chief resource, and an individual's standing depended upon his relationship to it. Within the 20,000 or so villages wherein the vast majority of north Biharis lived, pervasive inequality prevailed. Within the villages three social levels can be distinguished, albeit with imprecise boundaries. At the top were small landlords and rich peasants; beneath them were middle peasants; and at the bottom were poor peasants.<sup>2</sup>

The poor peasants were characteristically low caste, Harijan, or low status Muslim and comprised around 40 per cent of the population. The poor peasants may be defined by their possession of insufficient land on which to subsist, which meant that to survive they depended wholly or partially on the sale of their labour. They included sharecroppers, short-term tenants, petty occupancy tenants, and landless labourers. They also incorporated village artisans and fishermen, who characteristically combined their occupations with small scale cultivation and with agricultural labour.

The middle peasants generally came from middle and low castes and comprised some 40 per cent of the population. Their defining characteristic was control of sufficient land, generally as occupancy tenants but occasionally as petty zamindars, to provide subsistence through the use of family labour, thus freeing them from the necessity to

sell their labour elsewhere. However they did not have enough land to be able to employ labour.<sup>3</sup>

Above the middle peasants stood the 'big men' in local society, namely the small landlords and rich peasants. These men may be described as the 'village elite'. They were generally high caste or else high status Muslim and comprised some 10 per cent of the population. Because they played a pivotal role in north Bihar society and politics they require careful attention.

The members of the village elite held substantial areas of land as zamindars or as occupancy tenants. They had this land cultivated by middle and poor peasants under a variety of tenurial arrangements. In villages in which the land was owned by a large absentee landlord, rich tenants comprised the elite. In the Madhubani subdivision of the Darbhanga district, for example, where the Maharaja of Darbhanga owned most of the land, Brahman occupancy tenants held sway over society. However wherever they themselves owned the land in a village, small resident landlords held sway. Muzaffarpur district, for example, was dominated by small landlords. Because zamindari landholdings were fragmented and dispersed, however, the ownership of the land in many villages was often divided between small resident, and large absentee landlords.<sup>4</sup> In this situation the village elite comprised both small landlords and rich peasants. Frequently, moreover, an individual had dual status '... both as a proprietor and a ryot ...',<sup>5</sup> For example circa 1910 Ram Sakhi Tewari, a Brahman of Dumari village in Darbhanga, held about fifty acres in the Dumari village and a larger area scattered through two neighbouring villages. He held some of this land as a zamindar, and rented the rest from the Maharaja of Darbhanga.<sup>6</sup>

Both conflict and collaboration occurred within the village elite.<sup>7</sup> Its members quarreled over the control of land and labour and were subject to inter-caste and intra-caste rivalry. Differences also arose out of conflicts of interest between zamindars and ryots. Nonetheless, as high caste men and as controllers of land and labour the members of the elite had common interests against those lower down in village society.



They also occupied a common position in relation to those who held power outside the world of the villages. The direct power of the members of the village elite was limited to their immediate locality. To exert influence beyond their village they needed to forge alliances with the elites of other villages and to interact with the great landlords and the urban professional and administrative elite.

Beyond the world of the villages, a small group of great landlords existed. These men were descendants of the ruling chiefs who had held sway under the Mughals. Their former princely status meant that, in contrast to developments in most of the zamindari estates in the region, their properties had been held together through primogeniture. The leading great landlord was Rameshwar Singh, Maharaja of the Darbhanga Raj, eighteenth in a line of landed magnates that had come to power in 1556, and head of the Maithil Brahman community, the elite religious community of Bihar. Rameshwar Singh's property covered some 2,400 square miles, which was about 11 per cent of the total area of north Bihar. Rameshwar Singh received, from land rents, an income of approximately Rs. 4,000,000.<sup>8</sup> He paid 10 per cent of this income as land revenue and cess to the provincial government, and spent another 10 to 15 per cent in the administrative costs of running holdings spread over a wide area. The remainder, supplemented by the proceeds from investments in industrial undertakings and real estate, formed a substantial sum, much of it spent in a manner befitting a Maharaja of ancient line.<sup>9</sup>

The Maharaja of Darbhanga owned much of the northern half of Darbhanga district, and had properties in the districts of Muzaffarpur, north Monghyr, north Bhagalpur and Purnea. Among the other great landlords, the Maharaja of Hatwa owned most of the northern half of Saran district, and between them the Maharani of Bettiah, the Maharaja of Ramnager and the zamindar of Madhuban owned almost all of the district of Champaran. The Maharajas of Darbhanga and Hatwa employed assistants to run their estates, whereas the other great landlords leased out, on a commission basis, the right to collect rents to *thikadars* (rent-farmers).<sup>10</sup> The *thikadars* generally came from among the small landlords and rich peasants, but in Champaran they also included European indigo planters.



Also outside the world of the villages were the towns of north Bihar. Less than 3 per cent of the population lived in the towns, which were sleepy backwaters rather than dynamic centres of growth. Patna, the nearest large urban centre and itself scarcely a thriving metropolis, lay south of the broad stream of the Ganges. The population of the towns consisted of professionals, government servants, bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans and unskilled labourers. The professionals and government servants came from high caste backgrounds and had kinship and mutual interest ties with the landlords and the rich peasants. The bankers and larger merchants came from the Marwari and other Hindu trading communities, and underwrote the moneylending activities of small landlords and rich peasants. Muslims comprised the majority of the smaller shopkeepers and artisans, while the unskilled workers were generally low caste or Harijan. For a schematic representation of the structure of north Bihar society, please refer to Diagram 1.1 (page 8).

## II

In north Bihar grave inequality in the distribution of property provided potential for the rise of tension and the emergence of conflict, but this inequality also created the relations of dependence which knit society together.<sup>11</sup> In the villages the small landlords and the rich peasants controlled most of the land. In consequence, they dominated the grain market, controlled the supply and distribution of credit, and decided the agrarian labourers' employment prospects and their wages and working conditions. Poor peasants were at the beck and call of rich peasants and small landlords. Through their possession of sufficient land on which to subsist, middle peasants had more independence, but they were generally entrapped within the credit and grain-dealing networks operated by those above them in the social scale.

These relations of dependence were articulated through the caste system. North Bihar had a predominantly Hindu population, and the caste hierarchy mirrored, reinforced and was reinforced by the differential distribution of economic and political power. The only substantial non-Hindu group consisted of Muslims, who made up 16.1 per

# DIAGRAM 1.1

## Social Structure in North Bihar, circa 1900

<i>Agricultural Occupations</i>	<i>Non-Agricultural Occupations</i>
<p>The great landlords (high caste)</p> <p>European indigo planters</p>	
<p>The village elite: small landlords and rich peasants (high caste)</p>	<p>Lawyers, teachers, doctors and other professionals; money-lenders and big traders (high and middle caste)</p>
<p>Middle peasants: occupancy tenants and some petty zamindars (middle and low caste)</p>	<p>Artisans and small traders (middle and low caste)</p>
<p>Poor peasants: dwarf- holders, sharecroppers and labourers (low caste, Adivasi and Harijan)</p>	<p>Servants (low caste)</p>
	<p>Scavengers (Harijan)</p>



cent of the population.<sup>12</sup> A small number of Muslims were notable as large zamindars, while the rest of the community were dispersed throughout village society.<sup>13</sup> For information on the size of the region's main caste and community groups, please refer to table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1

## Caste and Community Groups in North Bihar, 1901

	<u>Percentage of Population</u>
<i>a) Hindu Groups</i>	
<u>Higher Caste*</u>	
Bhumihar	4.6
Brahman	4.7
Kayasth	1.4
Rajput	4.9
<u>Total Higher Caste Groups:</u>	<u>15.6</u>
<u>Middle Caste</u>	
Koeri	4.8
Kurmi	3.0
Yadav	12.0
<u>Total Middle Caste Groups:</u>	<u>19.8</u>
<u>Lower Caste Groups</u> (including <i>Harijan</i> groups)	
Chamar	4.1
Dhanuk	3.0
Dusadh	5.0
Hajjam	1.4
Kalwar	1.1
Kamar	1.3
Kandu	2.4
Kewat	1.2

Percentage of PopulationLower Caste Groups (Cont'd)

Kumhar	1.1
Mallah	2.2
Musahar	2.6
Nuniya	1.8
Tanti	2.3
Teli	3.0

Other groups (all less than  
one per cent of the total  
population) 15.4

Total Lower Caste and Harijan 47.9  
Groups:

Total Hindus: 83.3

b) Non-Hindu Groups

Muslim	16.1
Miscellaneous (including Adivasis, Brahmos, Buddhists, Christians and others)	0.6

---

**Total of all Groups:** 100

---

Source: Census of India 1901, Provincial tables.

Figures adjusted to discount south gangetic  
portions of Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts.

- \* Hindu groups are designated as higher, middle or lower caste in terms of their economic well-being, political influence and social status. In most instances a high correlation existed between level of wealth, degree of influence, and social rank. The Kayasths form a partial exception, but they are listed here as a 'higher'



caste because their wealth and power, based on land-holding and on their role as a literati, more than compensated for their relatively low ritual status.

---

The ideology of the caste system only sanctioned political initiatives among high caste groups. This ideology presented society as innately and unchangeably hierarchical, and insisted that the only legitimate course open to the individual was to accept without complaint his position in the social order and to fulfil the duties and obligations implied by that position. This ideology had been made concrete in an elaborate etiquette of day to day behaviour which, Barrington Moore Jr. comments, had decisive political results. 'Make a man feel humble by a thousand daily acts and he will act in a humble way.'<sup>14</sup>

The basic unit of the caste system, the *jati* or sub-caste, comprised an endogamous group whose members usually lived within a circumscribed geographical area. *Jatis* were internally differentiated economically. The poorer members of a *jati* generally gave allegiance to and received patronage from their more prosperous *jati* fellows. Through their character as 'social pyramids' *jatis* formed part of the prevailing patron/client pattern of politics, and encouraged the factionalisation, along vertical lines, of village society.<sup>15</sup>

In north Bihar, Brahmans, Rajputs and Bhumihars (also known as military Brahmans and Babhans) predominated. These groups all but monopolised land-owning and held first place among the tenantry. Brahmans, Rajputs and Bhumihars comprised only a small proportion of the population of the region. Particular high caste groups were concentrated within particular areas. In a village studied by Ramashray Roy, more than one-fifth of the population were Brahmans, while in the Beguserai area in north Monghyr around one-fifth of the population were Bhumihars. In Saran district, Rajputs comprised 10 per cent of the population.<sup>16</sup> In a context in which, with the exception of the Yadavs, the other groups in the social hierarchy were also small, local concentration of Brahmans, Rajputs and Bhumihars contributed to their social and political pre-



eminence. Members of the Kayasth caste also had great influence. The Kayasths functioned as a literati. They monopolised the post of *patwari*, or village accountant, occupied many positions in the lower ranks of the bureaucracy, and dominated the legal profession.

The Yadavs (also known as Goalas and Ahirs), and the Koeris and Kurmis predominated in the middle range of the social hierarchy. The Kurmis and the Koeris had a reputation as skilful, hardworking cultivators, while the Yadavs, the most numerous caste group in north Bihar, combined their traditional occupation of cow-herding with tenancy cultivation.

Among the poor peasants low caste and Harijan groups predominated. Among the lower castes the Dusadhs and the Dhanuks formed the largest groups. Harijans comprised one-sixth of the north Bihar population. They were segregated into one of the three or four hamlets that made up the north Bihar village, and suffered discrimination in every aspect of their lives. The Chamars and the Musahars were the two largest Harijan groups. In 1909 one official patronisingly described the Musahars as 'field labourers, whose wages are paid in kind... They live in a kind of social thralldom, sometimes selling themselves, their wives, and children to lifelong servitude for paltry sums'.<sup>17</sup>

The inequalities which were integral to the relations of dependence in north Bihar contributed to social stagnation through their impact on the health and education of the mass of the people. The very conditions which provided reasons for tension curtailed its expression.

Among the mass of the population inadequate diet caused malnutrition, endangered the intellectual development of children, and made people easy targets for the impact of disease, an impact facilitated by the insanitary, overcrowded conditions in which most people lived.<sup>18</sup> Every year, cholera and typhoid took their toll. Recurrent intestinal infections and hookworm were widespread, and adversely affected people's vitality. Malaria was widely prevalent: a survey done in the 1920s on children under ten years of age revealed that 7 per cent of them had an enlarged spleen as a result of malarial infection.<sup>19</sup> Good



health rarely existed among those who were worst fed and worst housed and most exploited. Those with the most reason to protest often had the least physical capacity to do so. One European planter, describing the workers employed in indigo concerns, condescendingly concluded that

They are mostly of the very poorest class. Many of them are plainly half silly, or wholly idiotic; not a few are deaf and dumb; others are crippled or deformed, and numbers are leprous and scrofulous. Numbers of them are afflicted in some districts with goitre, caused probably by bad drinking water; all have a pinched, withered, wan look, that tells of hard work and insufficient fare.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, inadequate education circumscribed the horizons of the people and thus helped limit the expression of conflict and tension. Only the landed could afford to educate their children. Illiteracy was all but universal; in 1921, less than 5 per cent of the population could read and write.<sup>21</sup> Though adept in the long established methods of winning a meagre living from the soil, villagers knew little of book-learning and of life and circumstances outside their immediate locality, and thus tended to accept existing circumstances as the only ones possible.

Poor communications limited the villager's mobility, and hence increased his parochialism and his dependence on the village elite. During the monsoon, movement became extremely difficult, and even during the dry seasons the railways were overburdened and the road system inadequate. Some villagers responded to oppression and economic pressure by migrating and others set out on long religious pilgrimages. But it seems that most lived their entire lives in close proximity to their place of birth.

Linguistic diversity strengthened parochialism. Most people spoke, as their first language, a distinctive village dialect current only in a limited area. In central and eastern north Bihar these dialects were part of the Maithili language, while in the west they formed the Bhojpuri language. Both languages were variants of Hindi, the lingua franca of the region. People from different areas could interact by means of Hindi, but their communication was imperfect.



In the early twentieth century the society of north Bihar was generally quiescent, but nonetheless open conflict did occur. Many riots erupted over agrarian disputes and numerous cases appeared before the courts. Characteristically, the open expression of conflict focussed within the 'landed interest', a term which can be used to incorporate great and small landlords, indigo planters and other *thikadars*, and rich peasants.<sup>22</sup>

Broadly speaking, two main kinds of conflict developed. One kind involved a struggle between the village elite and those who held power externally to the villages. In this kind of struggle the members of the village elite attempted to unite the people from their locality behind them. One leader in this kind of conflict was Babu Lal Chand of Dharampur in Purnea, a rich peasant who rented a large area of land from the Maharaja of Darbhanga. In March 1920 the local Darbhanga Raj manager described him as

...a reasonable man but never a friend of the [Darbhanga] Raj. He avoids open fight but covertly instigates tenants to challenge the Raj. His father Raja Chand (deceased) moved the whole Pergunnah [i.e. locality] against the Raj in the time of [the previous manager] Mr Mayer. He has great influence and cultivates Raj parta land [i.e. land lying fallow] without settlement [i.e. without paying rent].<sup>23</sup>

The second kind of conflict occurred within the village, between rivals for control over local affairs. In north Bihar, 'factionalism', in the sense of the crystallisation of two distinct groups whose leaders competed for local power, frequently developed within village society. Both factions would usually be led by high caste men, sometimes from the same caste group and on occasion from the same family group. Faction leaders relied for support on their kinsfolk and on their retainers and clients within village society. Inter-factional struggle perhaps performed a 'safety-valve' function, allowing the expression of tensions without threatening the stability of the social order.<sup>24</sup>

These two kinds of conflict can be isolated for analytical purposes, but in actuality they tended to overlap. Those involved in struggles against rivals within the villages tended to look outside for support. Meanwhile, external



power-holders aligned against members of the village elite tended to try and undercut their opponents by linking up with their opponent's rivals for dominance within the village. Nonetheless, the boundary of the world of the village provided a threshold, and internal and external conflicts often proceeded independently.

The conflicts which developed concerned control over land and control over labour and hence were important to all members of village society. Yet because of the effectiveness of the control they exercised the leadership of conflict and the direction of dissidence remained in the hands of the members of the village elite. Middle and poor peasants seldom took independent initiatives in the development of conflict. They participated in conflict, but only as clients and retainers of the members of the village elite.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to conflict over land and labour, communal conflict also occurred. Like factional conflict, communal conflict involved vertical cleavages within society. Hindu-Muslim tension often manifested itself, and when on certain days of the year one or the other group engaged in the public espousal of its religion, violence frequently erupted. In part because the occasions for eruption could be predicted in advance, and in part because Hindus and Muslims directed violence against one another rather than against the village elite or the authorities, communal turbulence could be contained. Eruptions of communal turbulence also seem to have functioned as a 'safety-valve', allowing the dissipation of tensions deriving from economic, political and social inequalities. Communal conflict, like conflict over land and labour, generally operated under the direction of the village elite. In early twentieth century north Bihar the effective control exercised by this elite focussed on and contained the open expression of conflict, thus providing a stable basis for the continuation of British rule.

### III

In the early twentieth century the administrative structure established by British rule overarched north Bihar. In each of the region's seven districts a Collector-Magistrate (also known as a District Officer) held responsi-



bility, on behalf of the provincial government, for routine administration. The Collector-Magistrate, according to an official who served in the post, functioned as

...the pivot on which the whole administration turns; all those below him are under his orders and engaged in assisting him; all those above him depend upon him for information and are engaged in giving him orders and instructions.<sup>26</sup>

Junior officials known as Subdivisional Officers assisted the Collector-Magistrate and held responsibility for one of the two or three subdivisions of each district.

Above the level of the district the division, supervised by a Divisional Commissioner, comprised the next unit of organisation. The Tirhut division comprised the central and western districts of north Bihar – Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Saran and Champaran – and had its headquarters at Muzaffarpur town. The remainder of the region – comprising north Monghyr, north Bhagalpur, and Purnea – lay within the Bhagalpur division, which also included territory in south Bihar, and which had headquarters at Bhagalpur town on the southern bank of the Ganges. The Divisional Commissioners reported to the provincial government, which was stationed at Patna during most of the year and at Ranchi, in the hill country in southern Bihar, during the hot weather. The officials in charge of divisions, districts and subdivisions usually came of British stock and supervised a staff of Indian assistants and clerks.

District officials carried out the day-to-day work of administration. They held responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, for the collection of the land revenue, for the well-being of the population and for the successful completion of a variety of miscellaneous administrative duties. They sought to minimise social conflict by mediating between conflicting groups, using their authority to bring about a mutually acceptable settlement. District and Subdivisional Officers carried a heavy burden, working in large, thickly populated areas in which communications were very poor. Elizabeth Whitcombe comments that in the neighbouring United Provinces,



It was an easier matter for European officers in the later nineteenth century to leave a district for another or for a sanctioned spell abroad than it was for them to move about within one during the performance of their duties.<sup>27</sup>

Local officials in Bihar found it even harder to keep up with developments in their districts. The Bihar districts were twice as large as those in the United Provinces, and because of its financial weakness the Bihar and Orissa government spent less than any other provincial government on the maintenance of administration.<sup>28</sup>

As Table 1.2 illustrates, Bihar and Orissa was the poor relation among the provinces of British India. Each year the province, from land revenue and other sources, raised Rs.1,669 per thousand head of population, which was less than half the average amount (Rs.4,084) raised by the other provinces. Unlike most of the other provinces, Bihar and Orissa could not profit by increasing the amount levied in land revenue because, in common with the other areas in the former Bengal Presidency, the receipts of Bihar and Orissa from land revenue had been decided by the Permanent Settlement of 1793, and had only been subject to marginal increases since then.

The British had implemented the Permanent Settlement throughout the vast area incorporated within the former 'Bengal Presidency', which comprised the modern-day regions of Bangla Desh, West Bengal, Bihar, a substantial portion of Orissa and of parts of modern-day Uttar Pradesh. The British imposed the Permanent Settlement in an unstable, fluid context of land-holding in order to ensure economic and administrative stability by (a) vesting proprietary rights in the possession of established land-controlling families, and (b) declaring that the land revenue levied from those certified as zamindars (landlords) would not be increased.<sup>29</sup> The British administration exacted the land revenue demand according to a rigid timetable, irrespective of whether the harvest was good or bad, and in some parts of the Bengal Presidency social disruption occurred when established land-controllers, unable to meet their revenue payments, had to sell their land to urban-based speculators. In north Bihar, however, British revenue officials underestimated the productivity



of the land and hence demanded only a moderate land revenue, which permitted most of the land-controlling families to retain their position.<sup>30</sup>

TABLE 1.2

Income and Expenditure (1927-28 Budgets) per 1,000 inhabitants of each province of British India

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Revenue Rs.</i>	<i>Expenditure Rs.</i>
<i>Bihar and Orissa</i>	1,669	1,766
Bengal	2,295	2,372
United Provinces	2,848	2,513
Assam	3,503	3,679
Madras	3,911	3,690
Central Provinces	4,036	4,229
Punjab	5,380	5,258
Burma	7,824	9,156
Bombay	8,003	8,227

Source: Adapted from table in Government of Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission* (12 vols., London 1930), XII, p.388.

The implementation of the Permanent Settlement established stability but had adverse effects on the finances of the British administration and on the economy of the region. By holding the land revenue demand constant the British ensured that any increase in the rental value of the land would benefit the zamindars. The British hoped that in order to be able to demand higher rents, the zamindars would improve agricultural methods and techniques so as to increase production. More generally, the British hoped that with the security of a clear title to the land the zamindars would display sufficient industry and initiative to bring prosperity to the region.<sup>31</sup> These hopes met with disappointment.



The zamindars were enmeshed within an economic, social and cultural context entirely different from that in which the British 'improving landlord' had emerged. To maintain and advance their local political position zamindars sought to increase the number of people under their control. They displayed little interest in new techniques and technologies which would enable them to employ less labour, and instead of re-investing their profits in capital improvement they used them to service extensive patronage and credit networks and to bolster their prestige by means of conspicuous consumption.<sup>32</sup> They could prosper without becoming improving landlords, not least because British policy inhibited the indigenous industrial development which might have galvanized the agrarian economy.

Steady population growth allowed zamindars to increase their profits without changing their style of land management. They profited as formerly uncultivated lands came under the plough, and the growing demand for land meant that rents could be raised without a commensurate increase in production. In addition an over-supply of labour kept their wage bill low. Most of the rising profits from land rent stayed with the zamindars. The designers of the Permanent Settlement intended that nine-tenths of the rent collected by the zamindars should be passed on to the government as land revenue. By the end of the nineteenth century this officially approved ratio had become reversed, and one-tenth of the rental income went to the government while the remainder stayed with the zamindars.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to their rental income, zamindars profited from the exaction of *abwabs*, which were illegal but customarily sanctioned dues. They also engaged in money-lending and grain-dealing. Through their various earnings they cornered much of the agrarian surplus, only to dissipate it in non-productive ways. The 'peasant was suffering many of the pains of primitive capitalist accumulation, while...society reaped none of the benefits'.<sup>34</sup>

The Bihar and Orissa government could not command more than a small portion of the agrarian surplus. Indeed, because of the original moderation of the zamindari settlement in the region, the government's share of the surplus was even smaller than that extracted as land revenue elsewhere in the Bengal Presidency. Because of the agrarian



character of the provincial economy only limited funds could be raised from other sources, and the Government of India, itself subject to fiscal difficulties, was not willing to give Bihar and Orissa special financial aid.<sup>35</sup> The provincial government had extremely limited funds, yet had to provide administrative services to a numerous and rapidly increasing population. Before 1911, when Bihar and Orissa were still part of the Bengal Presidency,

...the standard of expenditure in Bengal was lower than in any other province in India; and in Bengal the standard in...Bihar and Orissa was little more than half of what it was in the rest of the province.<sup>36</sup>

This situation continued into the post 1911 period. (Table 1.3). In the administration of Bihar and Orissa, the provincial government commented in 1929, '...there has never been enough money in time past to provide anything like an adequate standard'.<sup>37</sup>

Because of financial stringency, the Bihar and Orissa administration could hold only a light rein over the people under its jurisdiction. In 1911, the management of affairs at the local level lay in the hands of less than 100 district officials, spread thinly throughout the twenty-one districts of the province. In north Bihar less than forty district officials held responsibility for the government of 21,406 square miles inhabited by more than 14 million people.<sup>38</sup> The provincial administration found itself fully occupied in the performance of its minimal tasks of collecting the land revenue and other taxes and of preserving public order. Because of the great disparity between the amount the zamindars collected in rent and *abwabs* and the amount they paid as land revenue, the collection of land revenue tended to look after itself. The collection of excise, stamp and other duties also proceeded smoothly. However the frequency of riots arising out of agrarian disputes and the high incidence of crime posed a challenge to the maintenance of public order. To uphold the law and to help preserve order, the administration looked to the judiciary and to the police and *chaukidars*.

The British boasted that they had brought the rule of law to India, but in north Bihar their laws were 'cobwebs for the rich and chains of steel for the poor'.<sup>39</sup> The courts



TABLE 1.3

Expenditure (1927-28 Budgets) on administrative services per 1,000 inhabitants of each province of British India

Jurisdiction	Education	Medical	Public Health	Agriculture	Industries
	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs
Bihar & Orissa	256	88	44	45	26
Bengal	305	128	73	52	29
United Provinces	392	77	58	68	29
Assam	382	157	160	76	25
Madras	514	179	82	82	49
Central Provinces	407	114	28	127	21
Punjab	753	229	101	264	42
Burma	1,040	370	268	158	34
Bombay	1,073	260	128	150	5

Source: Adapted from table in GGB, *Statutory Commission*,  
XII, p.377.

handled a large number of disputes, but did not effectively redress grievances. Judicial processes moved at a snail's pace, the law was complex, vague and inconsistent, and the lower ranks of the legal profession were riddled with corruption. The rich and the influential exerted undue influence, and the tactic of harassing an enemy by 'getting up' a false case against him was much used. The enemy might, if all went well, be convicted, and at the very least, he would be put to the inconvenience of attending at court to defend himself.

In a traditional society in which few people had a modern-style sense of civic duty, individuals willingly perjured themselves for their kinsmen or patrons. And if such testimony proved inadequate, there were always professional witnesses hanging about the law courts, ready, for a small fee, to present whatever evidence was required.<sup>40</sup> In 1908 F.E. Lyall, the Bhagalpur District Officer, commented in his official annual report that

No one who has not heard at first hand such tales as I have, can imagine the utter and cruel injustice now habitually worked in the name of justice through our Civil Courts, simply because all this tangled web of procedure has put the poorer man, the less educated, at the mercy of any unscrupulous man who chooses to ruin him by litigation.<sup>41</sup>

Yet it was because of its deficiencies that the judicial system operated as an effective bulwark of British rule. If the judicial system had operated more fairly, then it might have been employed by the disadvantaged in order to improve their position, thus upsetting the social order upon which British rule rested. Through their corruption, the courts reinforced and legitimised the dominance of the rich and the powerful. And through its indecisiveness and tardy pace, the judicial system operated as a 'safety-valve', providing a forum in which wealthy antagonists could let off their tensions and fight themselves to a financial standstill.

The police force operated in conjunction with the judicial system to preserve order. In north Bihar the core of the police force consisted of 3,000 trained career policemen. An auxiliary body of 26,000 *chaukidars*, or village watch-



men, acted in support of the trained force.<sup>42</sup> The administration recruited an average of one *chaukidar* for each 500 members of the population, and stationed, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, one or more *chaukidars* in each village. The *chaukidars* operated in their home villages. They were usually Dusadhs and generally inherited their posts from fathers or uncles. Their duties included guarding the villagers' crops, houses, and possessions against theft, reporting deaths, births, crimes and unusual events to the local police station, and assisting the police in the investigation of crime and the apprehension of criminals. In payment they received a miserly Rs.3 to Rs.5 a month, raised by a levy on the inhabitants of the village.<sup>43</sup>

An officially appointed committee drawn from among local zamindars, European indigo planters, and rich peasants, known as a *chaukidari panchayat* or union, held the responsibility of levying the *chaukidari* fee from the villagers and for recruiting, directing, and paying the *chaukidars*. Partly because of their low pay the *chaukidars* tended to be inefficient and corrupt. Not infrequently, they operated in collusion with local criminals. Their local residence and their employment by a committee made up of local notables greatly limited their independence. The *chaukidars*, Anand A. Yang comments, 'were never successfully incorporated into the official system'. Instead, they operated as the 'functionaries of the landholders' systems of control'.<sup>44</sup> The best that the author of the official 1921 Bihar and Orissa yearbook could find to say of them was that 'a large minority of *chaukidars* do their work with remarkable efficiency', and that 'no other class could perform these duties as cheaply'.<sup>45</sup>

The basic unit of police operations was the police station or *thana*. These two terms were used interchangeably, and denoted both the actual police station/*thana* building and the territory over which it had jurisdiction. Each district had some ten to twenty police stations, which meant that each station held jurisdiction over areas of tens of square miles populated by thousands of people. In Darbhanga in 1901, for example, there were twelve police stations and ten police outposts, manned by a total of 492 policemen. These policemen operated in an area of 3,348 square miles inhabited by 2,912,611 people. In



Darbhanga, there was one policeman to every 6.7 square miles and to every 5,919 members of the population.<sup>46</sup>

The staff of each *thana* consisted of a dozen or two constables under the direction of a 'Writer Head Constable', so called because of his literacy, and under the overall control of a Sub-Inspector. The constables were unarmed except for lathis, while the Sub-Inspector carried a revolver. Often, a couple of old shotguns lay about the *thana*, for use against bandits and rioters. The *thana* staff, with the assistance of the local *chaukidars*, handled the routine police business of the locality.

When a situation threatened to get out of control the local police could call for reinforcements from the Armed Reserve, a unit armed with muskets and made up of men seconded from the main police force for a two-year period of special training. In 1921 this unit consisted of 1,286 officers and men, of whom 400 were stationed in north Bihar. Help could also be requested from the Bihar and Orissa Military Police, an elite police unit of well-armed, highly-trained men divided into four companies, two of which were mounted. One company, the Gurkha Military Police Company, comprised 111 officers and men stationed at Muzaffarpur town; the other three companies were stationed south of the Ganges, delegated to protect the provincial capital, Patna, and the south Bihar coal fields. These units, recruited from among ex-army men, were under the command of the provincial Inspector General of Police. The military provided the last resort. From 1922 a company of British infantry was based at Muzaffarpur town; before then the nearest military help was south of the Ganges at Dinapur town, six miles west of Patna, the home base of a British infantry battalion.<sup>47</sup>

In north Bihar, a policeman's lot was not a happy one. It involved night duty, travel over difficult country, and physical danger. Because of its financial difficulties the provincial government kept the wages of the police to a minimum. Constables usually came from high caste but impoverished backgrounds and earned a wage, in 1921, of Rs.15 per month. Unskilled labourers earned about the same; rank and file railway and postal employees earned more. Most constables compensated themselves for their poor pay and hard working conditions by extorting money



and by accepting bribes. Indeed the opportunity to profit by corrupt practices helped greatly to attract recruits to the police force.<sup>48</sup>

Nor was corruption limited to the lower ranks. Writer Head Constables earned twice as much as constables but had a better education, came from a higher social stratum, and were accustomed to a higher standard of living. A Writer Head Constable could not live on his pay and even if he wished 'to run straight' he found himself 'driven to dishonesty'. The Writer Head Constable, according to Inspector General R.J. Hirst, was 'the cancer of the force, spreading his evil influence above and below him'. The rank above the Writer Head Constable was that of the Sub-Inspector. In his secret report of 1929 Hirst commented revealingly that 'some of our Sub-Inspectors enter the service with the desire to earn an honest living and some of that number contrive to keep their honest purpose'.<sup>49</sup>

Among the more highly paid and predominantly British higher ranks, the Inspectors and District Superintendents of Police, corruption was less frequent, though here it also existed. In 1919 and 1920 the administration established that four Inspectors, along with four Sub-Inspectors and three Head Constables, had been drawn into the network of corruption which Police Superintendent Frank Lockwood Bussell had created in Darbhanga and adjoining districts. The official investigation also revealed the collusion of several other policemen.

The Bussell case posed a dilemma for the administration. Some of the suspected policemen refused to give any evidence to the investigation committee, while others provided ample information, thus establishing a strong case against themselves. Would it be fair to punish those who had given information, while those who had refused to cooperate escaped punishment because there was insufficient concrete evidence against them? Eventually, in a decision which reveals official acceptance that a certain level of corruption was unavoidable, the administration dismissed only Bussell and his closest accomplice, and merely subjected the other culprits to departmental disciplinary action.<sup>50</sup>

Many policemen supplemented dishonesty with brutality. The *Indian Police Commission* of 1902 revealed numerous instances in which policemen had beaten up convicts, suspects and witnesses and recorded some incidents of torture.<sup>51</sup> Because of their behaviour people feared and distrusted the police and did not assist them in the execution of their duties.<sup>52</sup> Their work also suffered because of their sparse numbers. As Table 1.4 illustrates, Bihar and Orissa spent the least on police per head of population and had the lowest proportion of police to population of any of the provinces of British India.

TABLE 1.4

Ratio of people to police and cost of police in provinces of British India, 1929

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>People to Each Policeman</i>	<i>Cost per 1,000 of Population</i>
<i>Bihar &amp; Orissa</i>	2,372	236
Bengal	1,853	314
Assam	1,772	303
United Provinces	1,343	328
Madras	1,526	370
Central Provinces	1,259	424
Punjab	1,053	481
Bombay	776	700
Burma	954	893

Source: Adapted from table in GGB, *Statutory Commission*, XII, p.389.

Policemen formed part of a garrison dotted across the countryside, rather than active participants in the day-



to-day life of the people. Policemen depended on the information supplied by the *chaukidars*, and frequently only arrived on the scene well after serious trouble had begun. Sometimes, the police did not even get wind of serious disturbances. On 16 June 1923 a group of peasants clashed with servants of the Darbhanga Raj near the Bahora indigo concern in Purnea. The peasants, incensed by their grievances over the cultivation of indigo, assaulted several men, injuring one of them seriously. But the local Darbhanga Raj manager did not report the incident to the police because, he explained to his superiors, 'the Sub-Inspector of Pirpainti is exorbitant in his demands'.<sup>53</sup>

In north Bihar the British maintained only a skeletal apparatus of police/administrative control. District officials and regular policemen, the main representatives of the state in north Bihar, were so thin on the ground that in the early twentieth century peasants tended to perceive 'the State as a distant entity to which they attached both their hopes and fears'. The British administration operated, to use Ananad A. Yang's perceptive phrase, as a 'Limited Raj'.<sup>54</sup>

To keep their 'Limited Raj' running smoothly and cheaply the British depended upon collaborators drawn from the upper reaches of north Bihar society. These collaborators served in the *chaukidari panchayats* and participated in the organs of limited local government, namely the district and municipal boards. Some of the more prestigious of them also served in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, a consultative committee which drew issues to the attention of the provincial administration. These collaborators came from among that privileged minority which dominated north Bihar Society. In the nineteenth century the effective control by this minority of a grossly unequal society provided a stable basis for the continuation of British rule. However by the first decades of the twentieth century the pressure of population on an under-developed agrarian economy was beginning to bring this basis under challenge.

## IV

Throughout the nineteenth century the Bihar population had been increasing. In the eighteenth century famine, and the recurrent warfare during the final decades of Mughal rule, had kept the population down, but during the nineteenth century the Pax Britannica combined with effective famine relief measures to permit steady population growth. In 1800, vast tracts of north Bihar had been jungle or savannah, but by 1900 most of the previously uncultivated land had been brought under the plough. In 1881, the first year for which reliable census figures are available, north Bihar had a population of just over 13,000,000 and a population density of 615 per square mile. As Table 1.5 illustrates, population growth continued in the ensuing decades.

To judge from the figures of the decennial censuses, the total size of the region's population remained relatively constant between 1881 and 1921. However it should be noted that famine in 1897-98 and scarcity and epidemic in 1918-19 made heavy inroads, which means that the 1901 and 1921 census figures do not indicate accurately the size of the population for most of the preceding decade.<sup>55</sup>

In the period from 1920, during which the administration brought infectious diseases more effectively under control, the population expanded rapidly. Population growth resulted in an especially high density of population in Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga. Already in 1907 one British official had remarked that

Although exceeded by the figures for a few individual districts such as Howrah and Dacca, the portion of north Bihar which comprises the three districts of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga has a more teeming population than any other tract of equal size in Bengal or Eastern Bengal.<sup>56</sup>

During the course of the twentieth century, political turbulence became particularly frequent in this part of north Bihar.

During the nineteenth century there had been sufficient untilled land in the region to absorb the rise in population.

TABLE 1.5

Population, Population Density and Decennial Change in north Bihar, 1881-1951

Year	Population	Population per Square Mile (Total Area = 21,406 Sq. Miles)	Decennial Change	Percentage Change
1881	13,169,378	615	-	-
1891	13,977,588	653	+ 808,210	+ 6.14
1901	13,995,889	654	+ 18,301	+ 0.13
1911	14,293,479	668	+ 297,590	+ 2.13
1921	14,186,246	663	- 107,233	- 0.75
1931	15,316,708	716	+ 1,130,462	+ 7.97
1941	16,899,665	789	+ 1,582,957	+ 10.34
1951	18,392,836	859	+ 1,493,171	+ 8.84

Source: Censuses of India 1881-1951. Figures discount south gangetic sections of Monghyr and Bhagalpur.

In the first three-quarters of the century peasants had been able to take up the cultivation of lands previously held by zamindars as jungle or wasteland. At the start of the century Darbhanga, for example, included large tracts of uncultivated land. One official, writing in 1802, commented that 'For miles and miles are plains with only here and there a few bighas in cultivation, and the uncultivated land surrounding it apparently as well worth the trouble of agriculture as any part I have seen'.<sup>57</sup> Over the ensuing years the area under cultivation greatly expanded. By 1850, three-quarters of the total area of the district and by 1875 just under four-fifths of the total area was being cultivated. Of the land that had not been brought into cultivation, one quarter was devoted to mango groves and grazing, one quarter was unculturable waste, and half consisted of roads, rivers, house sites and tanks. In Darbhanga, the Settlement Officer concluded in 1903, 'there is very little room for the extension of cultivation'.<sup>58</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century only Purnea, north Bhagalpur and Champaran among the seven north Bihar districts had arable land not yet under cultivation. However the prevalence of malaria in Champaran helped check the extension of cultivation. As an endemic malaria and cholera area Purnea had a similarly bad reputation. 'Don't take poison,' the proverb ran, 'You have to die so go to Purnea'.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the western portion of Purnea, and much of north Bhagalpur, suffered from the depredations of the torrential river Kosi, which changed its course frequently, ruining land by burying it in deposits of sand and endangering the lives and property of those who settled in its basin.<sup>60</sup>

The disappearance of surplus land boded ill for the future of the people of north Bihar. By the beginning of the twentieth century the region was entering a period of demographic crisis. In the ensuing decades population growth brought increased pressure on the land, and caused, because of the sluggishness of the economy, a decline in living standards.<sup>61</sup>

The sluggishness of the economy derived principally from the zamindari system, which encouraged inefficiency and ensured that much of the agrarian surplus was spent non-productively. Most of the actual work of cultivation

was done by poor peasants on small, scattered plots. These poor peasants received a minimum return for their labour, and any extra output they produced tended to be skimmed off. Hence they had no incentive to increase their productivity. Meanwhile, landlords and rich peasants did not invest in technical innovation and organisational modernisation because they could profit easily and substantially through renting out their holdings and by extending credit, at exorbitant interest rates, to the chronically indebted middle and poor peasants.<sup>62</sup>

Some development did occur within the north Bihar economy, but it had only limited repercussions. From the 1880s the establishment of a railway network encouraged the expansion of commercial agriculture through the growth of internal trade in food-grains and in tobacco, indigo and other cash crops. However only landlords and rich peasants had the freedom from indebtedness and the storage and local transport facilities necessary for the exploitation of the new opportunities. Moreover, even their returns were limited by a marketing structure which siphoned off most of the profits into the pockets of European entrepreneurs. Rather than re-investing them in the agrarian economy, these entrepreneurs spent their gains non-productively or else repatriated them overseas.<sup>63</sup>

Apart from encouraging, without notable success, the lessening of population pressure through migration, the British offered no solutions to north Bihar's agrarian problems. They spent only a token amount on research into agricultural improvement and did nothing to arrest the decline in the quality of the region's livestock resulting from the shortage of pasture. Moreover, they ignored the devastating ecological effects of deforestation, of the cultivation of marginal lands and of the building of railway embankments athwart natural lines of drainage.<sup>64</sup> The British realised that the zamindars had failed to become improving landlords and to galvanize rural society. However because of their respect for private property, and because they relied on the zamindars for social and political support, they did nothing, (apart from some largely ineffectual legal measures intended to limit the zamindars' worst excesses)<sup>65</sup> to alter the land-holding structure so as to promote greater efficiency and to encourage agricultural reinvestment. Indeed so crucial did the British re-

gard the stability of the zamindari system that they frequently, through the agency of the 'Court of Wards', protected zamindari estates from bankruptcy and disintegration.<sup>66</sup> The contradiction between economic rationality and political expediency could not have been more complete. Overall, the agrarian economy of north Bihar stagnated within the restrictive framework maintained by India's colonial rulers, but by virtue of its inclusion within an imperial system remained vulnerable to fluctuations in the world economy.<sup>67</sup>

Population increase pressed most heavily on the poor peasants. With growing numbers competing for the right to share-crop land and vying for employment as agrarian labourers, the bargaining position of the poor peasants became steadily worse. Some resorted to migration, either temporarily or permanently. For example, during the slack period in the agrarian cycle in densely populated Saran around 10 per cent of the population migrated to Bengal and elsewhere in search of work.<sup>68</sup>

When times were particularly hard, poor peasants also resorted to crime.<sup>69</sup> In 1919, 37 per cent of all convictions were for one month or less, and 64 per cent of all prisoners were serving sentences of three months or less. One British official concluded that 'A very large proportion of these short term convicts are...driven...by want of food to the commission of petty theft'.<sup>70</sup>

The pressure of population increase also threatened the position of the middle peasants. They had sufficient land to avoid having to sell their labour, but further subdivision of their land through inheritance threatened to cast them into the ranks of the poor peasants. They sought to acquire extra land in order to avert this development.

Population increase both benefited and disadvantaged the small landlords and rich peasants. It benefited them by increasing their leverage over those to whom they rented out their lands and over those whom they employed as labourers. Yet like the middle peasants, the break up of their holdings through inheritance threatened them with a decline in wealth, power and status.



By the beginning of the twentieth century inheritance had greatly fragmented zamindari property. In many instances, formerly influential zamindar families had descended into the ranks of the middle peasantry. The history of one Rajput family typified the fate of many. This family had migrated into Saran in 1788 and had acquired control of the villages of Gangapur and Bhagar. During the nineteenth century the property of the family became dissipated 'as successive generations of descendants inherited smaller and smaller shares'.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, the challenge of fragmentation threatened rich peasants, and therefore they and small landlords continually attempted to increase the area of land over which they had control.<sup>72</sup>

## V

During the first half of this century, north Bihar's population steadily increased but its economy continued to stagnate. This circumstance underlay the political dissidence which characterised the region during the period from 1917 to 1942. Its influence can be seen especially clearly in the disputes and confrontations that developed over the use and distribution of land. Its relationship with nationalist agitation cannot be established so directly, but it seems certain that the pressure of population growth created a reservoir of tensions and antagonisms on which the nationalist movement drew. And more directly, nationalist propagandists blamed British mis-management for the lack of economic development.

The first upsurge of mass unrest occurred in the period between 1917 and 1923. This turbulence may be related to the high prices and scarcity prevalent in these years. War-induced economic dislocation increased the prices of consumer goods and a succession of bad seasons resulted in food grains being in scarce supply and highly priced. Scarcity and high prices prevailed in 1915, 1919, and 1920 and high prices continued throughout the 1920s. Most people had few reserves with which to tide themselves over even one bad year, and suffered greatly from a recurrence of bad times.

The poor peasants suffered most. The wages for labour remained relatively steady, but from them labourers had

to pay higher prices for food. Fortunately, they customarily received part of their wages in kind. Sharecroppers, lacking storage facilities, had to sell much of their produce at harvest time, when prices were at a seasonal low, and then later in the year had to buy their food at a time when prices had risen.

The effect of scarcity and high prices on the middle peasantry was less well defined. The middle peasants devoted part of their holdings to cash crops, from the sale of which they earned enough to pay their rent and purchase consumer items while on the remainder of their land they grew food crops for family subsistence. Poor harvests could mean that a middle peasant produced both less to sell and less to consume. Higher prices might compensate for a lower outturn of cash crops. But since they often lacked storage facilities and because of pressing rent and debt obligations, middle peasants often had to sell cheap at harvest time and then contend with high prices in subsequent months. With the variables in the equation including higher prices, lower outturns, and a variety of rental and debt obligations it is impossible to generalise about the impact of scarcity and high prices on the middle peasants. The qualitative evidence in the provincial *Land Revenue Administration Reports* suggests that many suffered, but others may well have benefited.

In contrast to the poor peasants and many middle peasants, the members of the village elite benefited from high prices. Rich peasants found that higher food grain prices allowed them to pay their rents more easily. Small landlords earned more from the produce of the land over which they exercised direct control, and collected their rents more easily. Rich peasants and small landlords also profited as grain dealers, buying cheap at harvest time and selling dear later in the year. Yet despite these favourable economic circumstances members of the village elite took a leading part in popular protest.

Though it is clear that scarcity and high prices provided the background to much of the turbulence of the 1917 to 1923 period, the active part taken by members of the village elite indicates that the relationship between these conditions and dissidence can only be established in very general terms.

Partly this is a problem of sources. The statistics available are sketchy and unreliable and the qualitative evidence refers generally to developments within the province and its divisions rather than to the details of developments within the districts. Only a limited amount of detailed information is available about the particular situation at different stages of the agrarian cycle and about the variations in the incidence and impact of hard conditions in and between districts. Hence it is impossible to present a more fully detailed account of the chronologically and intra-regionally differential occurrence of scarcity and high prices.

But even if such an account existed it would only go part of the way in explaining the emergence and in defining the quality of popular dissidence in the 1917 to 1923 period. To understand this dissidence more fully, it is necessary to enquire in detail into the antecedents and course of particular protest campaigns. Accordingly the following three chapters deal in turn with anti-planter protest, with Swami Vidyanand's peasants' movement, and with the non-cooperation movement.



## NOTES

## Chapter 1

- 1 For information on north Bihar see J. Byrne, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Bhagalpur* (Calcutta 1911); Sir John Houlton, *Bihar: The Heart of India* (London, Calcutta 1953); Maori (pseudonym for James Inglis), *Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier* (London 1878); L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers for Champaran* (Calcutta 1907), *Saran* (Calcutta 1908), *Muzaffarpur* (Calcutta 1907), *Darbhanga* (Calcutta 1907), *Monghyr* (Calcutta 1909), and *Purnea* (Calcutta 1911); O.K.H. Spate, A.T.A. Learmonth and B.H. Farmer, *India, Pakistan and Ceylon: The Regions* (London, 3rd ed. 1967); and Minden Wilson, *History of Behar Indigo Factories*. (Calcutta, 1885 and 1908).
- 2 The following account of the social structure of north Bihar in the early 20th century draws conceptually on Hamza Alavi's 'Peasants and Revolution', in Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma (eds), *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, (New York, London 1973) and his 'Rural Bases of Political Power in South Asia', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 4,4, 1974. For information I have drawn on the *Bengal District Gazetteers*, the *Survey and Settlement Reports* and the decennial *Census* reports. For a preliminary discussion which emphasises the fluidity of the social structure for those above the subsistence level see Peter Robb, 'Hierarchy and Resources: Peasant Stratification in late Nineteenth Century Bihar', *Modern Asian Studies*, 13, 1, 1979. Robb's analysis raises some interesting points, but deals only briefly with the relationship between indebtedness and social position and neglects the tendency in traditional society for kinship and factional networks to help protect cultivators against fluctuations in their individual fortunes.
- 3 It should be noted that middle peasants of high caste status were subject to ritual sanctions against the per-

formance of various agricultural tasks. Hence they were obliged to employ labourers for these tasks. However since the amount of land they controlled was small and they had limited resources these high caste middle peasants generally employed only one or two labourers, and hired them only on a short term basis.

- 4 See Padri Annual Administrative Report [hereafter AAR], 10 August 1920, Collection [hereafter C] XXXIV, f 2A, General Department [hereafter G] 1919-20, Raj Darbhanga Archives [hereafter RDA].
- 5 O'Malley, *Saran*, p.123.
- 6 Interview, Umarpathi Tewari, Dumari village, Darbhanga, 17 October 1976. See also Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, (Bombay 1957) pp.1, 20.
- 7 For a study of the local elite in one north Bihar village see Ramashray Roy, 'Conflict and Co-operation in a north Bihar Village', *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, XLIX, 1963.
- 8 At the turn of the century the two largest zamindars in north Bihar after the Maharaja of Darbhanga were the Maharaja of Hathwa and the Maharani of Bettiah, who held respectively 561 and 1,824 square miles of property and paid Rs.250,000 and Rs.500,000 in land revenue. O'Malley, *Saran*, p.153, *Champaran*, pp.151-2. By 1907, in the north Bihar districts of Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Purnea, there were only 75 estates which paid more than Rs.5,000 in land revenue. Only six of these estates paid more than Rs.100,000; 21 paid between Rs.15,000 and Rs.100,000, and 48 paid between Rs.5,000 and Rs.15,000. In the Bengal Presidency as a whole by 1907 only 590 estates paid more than Rs.5,000 in land revenue. The ownership of these 590 estates was shared between 11,378 people, of whom only 504 paid, as individuals, more than Rs.5,000 per year. Government of Bengal [hereafter GBEN], Land Revenue Proceedings [hereafter LR], 19 S/4, B 107-10, July 1907, West Bengal Archives [hereafter WBA].
- 9 On the Darbhanga Raj and its rulers see Qeyamuddin Ahmed, 'Origin and growth of the Darbhanga Raj (1574-1666), based on some contemporary and unpublished documents', *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings*, XXXVI, Part II, 1961; Clive Dewey, 'The History of Mithila and the Records of the Darbhanga Raj', *Modern Asian Studies*, 10, 1976; Jata Shankar Jha,

- A History of Darbhanga Raj*, (Patna 1968) and *Biography of an Indian Patriot, Maharaja Lakmishwar Singh of Darbhanga* (Patna 1972); O'Malley, *Darbhangā*, pp.143-6; Ishvari Prasad Singh, *The Youngest Legislator of India: The Biography of the Hon'ble Maharajadhiraja Sir Kameshwar Singh, Bahadur, K.C.I.E. of Darbhanga* (Patna 1936); and Shyam Narayan Singh, *History of Tirhut from the earliest times to the end of the nineteenth century* (Calcutta 1922). See also the Maharajadhiraj Dr. Kameshwara Singh Memorial Volume, *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, XLVIII, 1962. For information about the Maithil Brahman Community, see Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, (London 1974) and Hetukar Jha, 'Nation Building in a north Indian region. The Case of Mithila', unpublished manuscript. (Hetukar Jha of the Sociology Department, Patna University kindly permitted me to use this manuscript.) For details of Rameshwar Singh's activities as a leader of orthodox Hinduism, see Richard Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926', *Modern Asian Studies*, 9, 2, 1975, pp.155, 160, 181. For the income and expenditure of the Darbhanga Raj see O'Malley, *Darbhangā*, p.145; 'Extracts from the Annual Report of the Officiating Manager', GBEN LR 48-49, May 1878, p.7, Bihar State Archives [hereafter BSA]; 'Report on the Administration of the Darbhanga Raj, 1914/1915', C XXXIV, G 1915-16, RDA.
- 10 O'Malley, *Darbhangā*, and Saran; Girish Mishra, *Agrarian Problems of Permanent Settlement. A Case Study of Champaran* (New Delhi 1978).
  - 11 See Ronald J. Herring, 'Radical Politics and Revolution in South Asia', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 7, 1, 1978.
  - 12 In all of the north Bihar districts except Purnea, Muslims formed around 12 per cent of the population. In Purnea, they comprised 43 per cent of the population, and were particularly numerous in the eastern half of the district. O'Malley, *Purnea*, pp.58, 60. Centuries of Mughal rule had helped shape one aspect of north Bihar social life: the subjugation of women. Bihar was 'the most Pardah ridden province in India' and women from better-off families rarely moved outside their homes. Women were second class citizens, and any initiative to improve their lot elicited a hostile reaction. Sexual exploitation was allied with social and

economic exploitation and poor and low caste women were preyed on by money lenders, zamindars and rich peasants. Circular from Ramnandan Misra, All India Congress Committee Papers [hereafter AICCP], G 43 (wi) (wii) 1935, Nehru Memorial Library [hereafter NML]; *Searchlight*, 24 Jan. 1930; Jha, 'Nation Building in Mithila', pp. 94-5.

- 13 In 1907, Muslims owned nine of the 75 estates in the districts of Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Purnea that paid more than Rs.5,000 in land revenue. Separate figures for the north Gangetic sections of Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts are not available. GBEN, LR 19S/4, B107-10, July 1907, WBA.
- 14 *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (London 1967), p.383.
- 15 See Ravinder Kumar, 'The Political Process in India', *South Asia*, 1, 1971. In 'North Bihar Village' Ramashray Roy examines the history of factionalism in the village of Radhanager from 1900 to 1960. For details about two factional conflicts in areas under the control of the Darbhanga Raj, see 'Brief of case of Charanjib Jha versus Naubat Jha', f. 10E, C V (Criminal), Law Department [hereafter L], 1920-21, RDA; Alapur Manager, Diary 28 May 1923, f 5, C XXV, G 1922-23, RDA. For a perceptive analysis of factionalism in village India see A.T. Carter, 'Political Stratification and Unstable Alliances in Rural Western Maharashtra', *Modern Asian Studies*, 6, 4, 1972.
- 16 Roy, 'North Bihar Village', p.298; Bihar Government Communique, *Searchlight*, 10 Feb. 1931; O'Malley, *Saran*, p.32.
- 17 O'Malley, *Monghyr*, p.63. See also Byrne, *Bhagalpur*, p.52.
- 18 M.N. Karna, Health, Culture and Community in a North Bihar Village, Ph.D. thesis, Patna University, 1970; Parihar AAR, C XXXIV G 1919-20, RDA; Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, pp.137-8.
- 19 G.E. Owen, *Bihar and Orissa in 1921* (Patna 1922), pp.142-4. See also Naredigar AAR, f 10J4, G 1937-38, RDA.
- 20 Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, p.21.
- 21 Nor was the extent of literacy increasing rapidly. As of March 1921'...only 4.27 per cent of the male, and 0.65 per cent of the female, or 2.43 per cent of the



- total population of the province was undergoing instruction'. Owen, *Bihar 1921*, p.112.
- 22 For general accounts of rioting see the annual GB(O), *Report on the Administration of the Police in the Province of Bihar (and Orissa)* (Patna, annual, various dates). The argument that follows draws on Anand A. Yang's 'The Agrarian Origins of Crime: A Study of Riots in Saran District, India, 1866-1920', *Journal of Social History*, XIII, 2, Winter 1979.
  - 23 Dharampur AAR, 13 March 1920, f 20 C XXXIV, G 1919-20, RDA. See also O'Malley, *Purnea* pp.130-1.
  - 24 Roy, 'North Bihar Village', pp.301-4.
  - 25 Yang, 'Riots in Saran', p.12. Unfortunately, however, our knowledge of clashes between distinct strata is limited because, as Frank Perlin points out, 'Only that conflict interfering with administration or manifested on such a scale as to be noticeable outside, is likely to be recorded, while conflict within the village, between castes or privileged and under-privileged landholders, is only too likely to escape the accounts'. See his 'Cycles, Trends and Academics among the Peasantry of North-West India', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2, 3, April 1975, p.367. Walter Hauser refers to an area in Patna district, south Bihar, where disputes within zamindari estates did not usually reach the courts because the zamindars decided the disputes and enforced their decisions with the aid of lathials. The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, 1929-1942, a Study of an Indian Peasant Movement, Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1961, p.52.
  - 26 J. Beames, *Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian*, (London, 1961), p.134.
  - 27 See her *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India. Volume One: The United Provinces under British Rule, 1860-1900*, (Los Angeles, London, 1972), p.241.
  - 28 Government of Great Britain [hereafter GGB], *Indian Statutory Commission*, (12 vols, London, 1930), XII, p.388.
  - 29 B.H. Baden-Powell, *The Land-Systems of British India* (3 vols, London, 1892), I, pp.389-442; Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal. An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Paris, 1963); Sir William Wilson Hunter, *Bengal M.S. Records* (2 Vols, London, 1894), I, pp.74-84.
  - 30 Baden-Powell, *Land Systems*, 1, p.440; Hunter, *Records*,

- I, pp.89-104; O'Malley, *Champaran*, p.125, *Muzaffarpur*, p.114, *Purnea*, pp.116-17; J.H. Kerr, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Darbhanga District 1896 to 1903*, (Patna 1926); Mishra, *Agrarian Problems*, pp.9-18.
- 31 Guha, *Rule of Property*, pp.167-86; Hunter *Bengal Records*, pp.74-84.
- 32 Walter C. Neale, 'Land is to Rule', in R.E. Frykenberg, (ed.) *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (London 1969) pp.9-15; Mishra, *Agrarian Problems*, pp.34-47.
- 33 A. Earle, Resolution 147T-R, 20 June 1904, appended to Kerr, *Darbhanga Settlement Report*; O'Malley, *Monghyr*, p.159; Baden-Powell, *Land Systems*, I, pp.438-40; Mishra, *Agrarian Problems*, pp.15, 28-29.
- 34 Moore, *Social Origins*, p.360. See also Daniel and Alice Thorner, *Land and Labour in India* (London 1962), p.109.
- 35 GGB, *Statutory Commission*, XII, pp.372-5, 387; B.R. Tomlinson, 'India and the British Empire, 1880-1935', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XI, 2-3, 1974.
- 36 GGB, *Statutory Commission*, XII, p.375.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p.391.
- 38 Secretary of State for India, *India Office and Burma Office List, 1911*, (London, 1911).
- 39 Pierre Proudhon, quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890-1914*, (New York, 1970, first pub. 1966), p.74.
- 40 Byrnes, *Bhagalpur*, pp.115-19; Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, pp.152-3, 163, 165; Owen, *Bihar 1921*, p.113; Parihar AAR C XXXIV, G 1915-16, RDA; letter 4, C IX G 1921-22, RDA; Alapur Manager, Diary, 9 May 1923, C XXV, G 1922-23, RDA; District Magistrate Johnson to Bhagalpur Commissioner, 21 February 1921, Government of Bihar and Orissa [hereafter GBO], Political Special Department [hereafter PS], f 66, 1921, BSA. See also Walter C. Neale, *Economic Change in Rural India. Land Tenure and Reform in Uttar Pradesh 1800-1955*, (London 1962), pp.192-7.
- 41 Quoted in Byrne, *Bhagalpur*, p.117.
- 42 Byrne, *Bhagalpur*, p.147; O'Malley, *Champaran*, p.139, *Saran*, p.136, *Muzaffarpur*, p.126, *Darbhanga*, p.129; *Monghyr*, pp.182-3, *Purnea*, p.147; Owen, *Bihar 1921*; H.C. Prior, *Bihar and Orissa in 1923*, (Patna 1924) p.75.

- 43 Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, p.156; Owen, *Bihar 1921*, p.103; Byrne, *Bhagalpur*, p.52.
- 44 Yang, 'Riots in Saran', pp.3, 7.
- 45 Owen, *Bihar 1921*, p.103. For consistently critical remarks, see the annual *Police Administration Reports*.
- 46 O'Malley, *Darbhanga*, pp.1, 129.
- 47 Rainey to Secretary, GOI, 29 May 1921, PS f 29, 1921, BSA; Dundas to GBO, PS f 218, 1922, BSA; E.L.L. Hammond to Army Secretary, 10/11 March 1922, HP f 49, 1921, NAI; PS f 572, 1921, BSA; Memorandum, HP f 49, 1921, NAI; GBO to Scroope, Tirhut Commissioner, 17 Apr. 1922, PS f 29, 1921, BSA.
- 48 Owen, *Bihar 1921*, p.99; Secret Report by Mr. R.J. Hirst, PS f 159, 1929, BSA [hereafter Hirst Report], pp.14-15; Special Branch Inspector's report, 21 June 1930, PS f 140, 1930, BSA; *Searchlight*, 20 Dec. 1922; Report of the Committee appointed to devise measures to deal with corruption in the Police, p.10, PS f 159(B), 1929, BSA [hereafter Corruption Report].
- 49 Corruption Report, p.6; Hirst Report, pp.6, 17, 18, 28.
- 50 GBO PS f 140, 1920, BSA.
- 51 See also HP f A 159-170, Aug.1910, NAI; Gertrude Emersen Sen, *Voiceless India*, (Benares, 1946), pp.169-82; Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, pp.161-9; Prasad, *Autobiography*, p.14.
- 52 H.C. Prior, *Bihar and Orissa in 1922*, (Patna 1923) pp.89-92.
- 53 C.S. McDonald, Bahora Division Manager to Chief Manager, 19 June 1923, f 20, C XXV G 1922-23, RDA.
- 54 Yang, 'Riots in Saran', pp.7, 13.
- 55 Hauser, 'Bihar Kisan Sabha', p.7, note 2. See also Ira Klein, 'Population and Agriculture in Northern India, 1872-1921', *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, 2, 1974.
- 56 O'Malley, *Muzaffarpur*, p.27.
- 57 Quoted in Kerr, *Darbhanga Settlement Report*, p.84.
- 58 *Ibid.*, pp.80, 81, 85.
- 59 O'Malley, *Purnea*, p.72.
- 60 Spate, et. al., *India*, pp.564, 565, 569.
- 61 Amiya Kumar Bagchi, 'Reflections on Patterns of Regional Growth in India During the Period of British Rule', *Bengal Past and Present*, XLV, Part 1, No.180, Jan.-June 1976, p.272.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp.260-267. See also Rajat. K. Ray, 'The Crisis of Bengal Agriculture, 1870-1927 - The Dynamics

- of Immobility', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, X, 3, 1973, pp.272-9.
- 63 Bagchi, 'Patterns of Regional Growth'; Ray, 'Crisis of Bengal Agriculture'; Mishra, *Agrarian Problems*, Chapter 4; C.M. Fisher, *Indigo Plantations and agrarian society in North Bihar in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries*, D.Phil. thesis, Cambridge University, 1976.
- 64 Ray, 'Crisis of Bengal Agriculture', pp.244-5; Bagchi, 'Patterns of Regional Growth', p.265.
- 65 Fisher, 'Indigo Plantations', pp.109-10.
- 66 One typical instance was their handling of the affairs of the Darbhanga Raj after the death of Momeshwar Singh, who was Maharaja of Darbhanga from 1829 until his death in 1860. During his reign Momeshwar Singh supported a host of kinsfolk, lived in great state, and spent lavishly on ceremonies. Many of his relatives held posts in the administration of the Darbhanga estates, and displayed an inefficiency only surpassed by their venality. When Momeshwar Singh died, leaving behind a minor heir, the Darbhanga Raj was verging on bankruptcy. But the provincial government stepped in, took over the administration of the estates and, by careful management, restored prosperity before handing them back to the heir, Lakmeshwar Singh, when he came of age in 1879. J. Burn, 'Report on the Administration of the Darbhanga Estates, 1860-1879', GBEN, LR 49-53, August 1880, BSA. See also Anand A. Yang, 'An Institutional Shelter: The Court of Wards in late Nineteenth Century Bihar', *Modern Asian Studies*, 13, 2, 1979.
- 67 Amiya Bagchi, 'Foreign Capital and Economic Development in India: A Schematic View', in Gough and Sharma, *Imperialism and Revolution*, p.53.
- 68 Anand A. Yang, 'Peasants on the Move: A Study of Internal Migration in India', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, X, 1, Summer 1979. See also O'Malley, *Muzaffarpur*, pp.87-8 and Saran, p.92 and Fisher, 'Indigo Plantations'.
- 69 For discussion of the relation between economic conditions and the crime rate see GBO Fortnightly Report Number Two [hereafter FR(2)], August 1920, PS f 8, 1920; G.E. Owen, *Bihar and Orissa in 1928-29*, (Patna 1930), p.61.
- 70 Owen, *Bihar 1921*, pp.100, 109.



- 71 James R. Hagen and Anand A. Yang, 'Local Sources for the Study of Rural India: The 'Village Notes' of Bihar', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XIII, 1, 1976, p.78.
- 72 Kerr, *Darbhangra Settlement Report*, p.101; O'Malley, *Darbhangra*, p.120.

## Chapter 2

- 1 O'Malley, *Champaran*, pp.108-11; Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, p.7.
- 2 B.B. Misra (ed.), *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran 1917-18* (Patna 1963) 'Introduction', p.8.
- 3 B.B. Kling, *The Blue Mutiny. The Indigo Disturbances in Bengal 1859-1862*, (London, 1966); Ranajit Guha, 'Neel-Darpan: The Image of a Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2, 1, October 1974.
- 4 Fisher, 'Indigo Plantations', p.35.
- 5 G. Mishra, 'Indigo Plantation and the Agrarian Relations in Champaran during the Nineteenth Century', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, III, 4 Dec. 1966; Byrne, *Bhagalpur*, p.129; O'Malley, *Champaran*, p.111, Saran, p.102-3, Muzaffarpur, p.101, *Darbhangra*, p.99, *Monghyr*, p.140-1, *Purnea*, p.130-1; K.K. Datta, *History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar* (3 vols, Patna, 1957), I, pp.179-80.
- 6 O'Malley, *Muzaffarpur*, p.126.
- 7 Gorakh Prasad to Editor, *Searchlight*, 31 Dec. 1920; 'The Voice of the Tenant', *Searchlight*, 22 Sept. 1922; Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922* (London 1972) p.64; Datta, *Freedom Movement*, II, p.224.
- 8 Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, pp.5-6; Fisher, 'Indigo Plantations', pp.55, 232.
- 9 Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, Ch.2.
- 10 Fisher, 'Indigo Plantations', Ch.5.
- 11 Maori, *Nepaul Frontier*, p.18.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 GBO, *Champaran Committee Report*, p.9.
- 14 'An Ex-Civilian', *Life in the Mofussil: or, the Civilian in Lower Bengal*, (2 vols, London 1878), I, pp.249-51;